



National Park Service News Release

For Immediate Release

Date: June 10, 2013

Erika Stein Selected as Superintendent of Kalaupapa National Historical Park

SAN FRANCISCO – Erika Stein has been selected as the new superintendent of Kalaupapa National Historical Park on the island of Molokaʻi in Hawaiʻi. She replaces Steve Prokop who was recently selected as superintendent of Redwood National and State Parks.

“Erika’s educational and professional background makes her the ideal candidate for this position. She is a well-respected leader with a proven track record of working collaboratively with the Kalaupapa community,” said Pacific West Regional Director Chris Lehnertz. “I’m delighted that she has accepted this assignment.”

Stein is currently the acting superintendent at Kalaupapa. She has worked at the park for more than five years, first as an archaeologist, then as the Cultural Resource Program Manager, before accepting her present temporary assignment. During her time at Kalaupapa she has been instrumental in growing the park’s cultural resource program, as well as its interpretation and education program. Among her accomplishments are her work with the Hawaiian Legacy effort to perpetuate traditional knowledge and skills, and her involvement with cultural resource education with local student groups. Stein was also part of the planning team for events celebrating the canonization of Saints Damien and Marianne. She will transition into the superintendent position permanently in late June.

“I’m so grateful to Kalaupapa and its community for all the opportunities, support, and encouragement that have already been afforded to me,” said Stein. “I look forward to guiding this richly diverse park, with all its astounding cultural and natural resources, and will continue to work with the staff and community to preserve this very sacred place.”

Prior to working for the National Park Service Stein was a contract archaeologist in Hawai`i and California. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of California in Santa Barbara, and a Master's Degree in Maritime Archaeology from James Cook University in Townsville, Australia. As part of her graduate education she participated in a field program in ethnography and marine sciences in the Solomon Islands.

Stein will be getting married on July 5th on the island of Moloka`i. She has a cat that has traveled with her since her graduate school days in Australia, as well as two dogs. She enjoys being active – she's a regular participant in endurance events, such as running, ocean swimming, and triathlons – and has been a regular hiker of the Kalaupapa Trail for the past six years. She also loves yoga and dancing hula with others in the Kalaupapa community.

The primary story at Kalaupapa is the forced relocation from 1866 to 1969 of people from Hawai`i afflicted with Hansen's disease (leprosy) to the remote northern Kalaupapa Peninsula on the island of Moloka`i. Today, Kalaupapa serves as a place for education and contemplation, where many families can reconnect with an ancestor once considered "lost".

Before Kalaupapa became a settlement for individuals with Hansen's disease it was home to Native Hawaiians who lived within the boundaries of what is now the park for more than 900 years. Structural remnants built and used over centuries are everywhere within the park and illustrate how early Native Hawaiians lived their daily lives.

Kalaupapa National Historical Park was designated as a unit of the National Park System on December 22, 1980. The park's authorized boundaries encompass 8,725 acres of land and 2,000 acres of water, though only a small part of the park – 23 acres – is owned by the National Park Service. The remainder is owned by various other government and private organizations, which work cooperatively with the National Park Service in managing the landscape. Parts of the park hold designations at both the state and federal level, including status as a state Natural Area Reserve, Forest Reserve, and Hawai`i State Seabird Sanctuary, as well as designation as a National Historic Landmark and National Natural Landmark.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

*******Editor's Note: Erika Stein is available for interviews at (808) 567-6802, x1702.**